

## Skagit County Legislative Report April 14, 2019

There are 14 days left in the regular session. The Legislature has finished their work in committees and will spend the remainder of the session on the floor. The Senate held floor action over the weekend to consider bills originating in the opposite chamber. Bills must pass out of the opposite chamber (i.e. House bills must pass the Senate; Senate bills must pass the House) by Wednesday, April 17th.

Budget negotiators from each legislative caucus and the Governor's office began meeting this last week, beginning the process of reconciling the House and Senate budget proposals to prepare final operating, capital, and transportation budgets. These behind-closed-doors negotiations are challenging to influence - even for other legislators that are not budget writers.

There is a public hearing scheduled this week at a joint meeting between the House Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee and the Senate State Government, Elections, and Tribal Relations Committee on [Initiative 1000](#). This proposal allows the state to remedy documented or proven discrimination against, or underrepresentation of, certain disadvantaged groups. Affirmative action would be allowed in public education, employment, and contracting if the action does not use quotas or preferential treatment. The initiative defines affirmative action and preferential treatment, and establishes a Governor's commission on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I-1000 is aimed at negating [Initiative 200](#), a measure approved by Washington voters in 1998 that banned the government from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment to people and groups based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin.

Initiatives to the legislature are submitted to the legislature at its regular session each January. Once submitted, the legislature must take one of the following three actions:

1. Adopt the initiative as proposed and it becomes law without a vote of the people
2. Reject or refuse to act on the proposed initiative and the initiative must be placed on the ballot at the next state general election, or
3. Propose a different measure dealing with the same subject and both measures must be placed on the next state general election ballot.

### Skagit County Priorities

The county's priority for GTHGA is a \$1.5 million capital budget request to upgrade the county's emergency communications system. We are pleased with the legislature's response to this request, providing \$750,000 in the House budget and \$1 million in the Senate budget. As negotiations between the chambers progress, we will continue working with Sen. Lovelett, Rep. Paul, and the county's entire delegation to support the highest level of funding possible in the final budget.

## Bill Summaries

Outlined below are relevant bills GTHGA is tracking for the county. Where a position is indicated below, GTHGA will communicate these positions to legislators if they are considered by the entire chamber.

Bill #	Title	Short Description	Status	Sponsor	Position
<a href="#">EHB 1219</a>	Providing cities and counties authority to use real estate excise taxes to support affordable housing and homelessness projects.	House Bill 1219, sponsored by Rep. Amy Walen (D- Kirkland), allows cities and counties to utilize real estate excise tax revenues for affordable housing. Cities and counties have the authority to use up to \$1 million of real estate excise tax revenues for affordable housing under current law, but the authority is scheduled to sunset in June 2019. Before passing the House, the bill was significantly amended. This version of the bill extends the sunset on the authority to January 1st, 2026, so long as the city or county documents that it has funds for certain capital projects in its capital facilities plan. The amendment also reinstates the financial cap on the use of REET II funding for affordable housing, limiting the annual amount to either \$100,000 or 25% of available funds not exceeding \$1,000,000. This cap does not apply to REET II funding used prior to June 30th, 2019. This version of the bill passed the Senate, 34-13.	S Passed 3rd	Walen	Support
<a href="#">SHB 1406</a>	Encouraging investments in affordable and supportive housing.	House Bill 1406, sponsored by Rep. June Robinson (D-Everett), would allow local jurisdictions to impose a .02 credit against the state sales tax to fund affordable housing. Cities that have imposed a local housing levy may impose the full .02 credit within city boundaries. Counties may impose the full .02 credit in unincorporated areas. In all other incorporated areas, the city and county would split the authority, and each would impose a .01 credit. If a city does not utilize the .01 credit within one year of the effective date of the bill, the county can then impose the .01 credit (and vice versa). The revenue may be used to acquire, rehabilitate, or construct affordable housing or fund the operations and maintenance of new units of affordable or supportive housing	S Ways & Means	Robinson	Support

		<p>for persons whose income is at or below 60% of the adjusted median income for the jurisdiction imposing the tax. A credit against the state sales tax is not an increase in the state sales tax; rather, it is sales tax revenue that would otherwise be deposited into the state general fund that is instead redirected to the local level. The substitute version of the bill that passed the House specifies that to enact the maximum 0.02 percent rate, a city must levy a qualifying local tax no later than 12 months after the effective date of the bill, rather than within 12 months of the effective date, and states that the median income calculation for cities imposing the tax to be based on the city's median income, not the county's (addressing a drafting error). The bill was further amended in the Senate Housing Stability and Affordability to add a voter approved property tax levy used solely for affordable housing to be eligible as a qualifying local tax source and removes provisions regarding calculation of median income for certain cities whose median income is not available from the United States Census Bureau.</p>			
<p><a href="#">EHB 1638</a></p>	<p>Promoting immunity against vaccine preventable diseases.</p>	<p>House Bill 1638, sponsored by Rep. Paul Harris (R- Vancouver), removes the philosophical or personal objection exemption from the requirement to receive the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine. The bill also requires that a public school, a private school or a licensed day care center receive proof of immunizations before the child can attend the school or center. The bill passed out of the House with a series of floor amendments. The version of the bill that passed the House maintains removal of the philosophical or personal exemption from the MMR vaccine, but allows exemption from all other vaccination requirements in certain additional cases, including: proof of disease immunity through laboratory evidence or a health care provider's attestation of disease immunity, exemption</p>	<p>S Rules 2</p>	<p>Harris</p>	<p>Support</p>

		based on “non-responder” status due to no positive antibody response to vaccinations, exemption based on health care providers’ attestation to adverse reactions to vaccines in family members, and grandfathering the restrictions for current exempted high school students. The bill was amended in the Senate Committee on Health and Long Term Care, removing these additional exemptions.			
<a href="#">HB 2119</a> (SB 5975)	Concerning the distribution of moneys derived from certain state forestlands.	House Bill 2119, sponsored by Rep. Debra Lekanoff (D- Bow), allows a county to pay, distribute, and prorate payments of money from the former Common School Trust Land exchanged into the State Forestlands Trust in the same way that general taxes are paid for the former forestlands subject to the exchange. The bill addresses revenue loss for junior taxing districts (including the Burlington School District) as a result of the state's Blanchard Forest Strategy. Although there are some concerns surrounding the general language of the bill, the bill cannot be drafted more narrowly without becoming special legislation. The bill passed through the House 61-31.	S 2nd Reading	Morris	Support
<a href="#">SB 5505</a>	Addressing the use of local stormwater charges paid by the department of transportation.	Senate Bill 5505, sponsored by Sen. Steve Hobbs (D- Lake Stevens), addresses local stormwater charges, which are paid by the Department of Transportation. As drafted, the bill would require that any fees that are levied by counties to be used solely for stormwater control facilities as they related specifically to state highway runoff, preempting counties from utilizing the funds for other needs. The bill passed through the Senate without amendment.	H Rules R	Hobbs	Oppose